

**Short-Term Leaves of Absence**  
**Mason Gross School of the Arts**  
**Updated September 2023**

The Mason Gross administration recognizes that instructors must sometimes be absent from class. All instructors are required to notify their department chair/director when they will be absent. In some instances, faculty absences must be reported to University Human Resources. Faculty members should work with their chair/director and the dean's office to determine whether this applies.

In addition to unanticipated absences that are beyond a faculty member's control, absence from the classroom will sometimes be required as a result of professional opportunities. It is important to weigh such opportunities against the primary obligation that we all have to our students, and therefore you should consult with your department chair and/or faculty mentor before accepting engagements that will involve a prolonged absence. The following shall apply to all short-term leaves of absence:

- If a faculty member needs to be absent from class, the department chair/director should be notified. If the absence is anticipated (e.g., for a professional development opportunity), the faculty member should provide that information on their syllabus at the beginning of the semester, together with an indication of how the class meetings will be covered.
- Short-term leaves of absence from teaching of fewer than 10 days must be approved by the chair; absences of 10 days or longer must also be approved by the dean. The "short-term leave of absence" form should be filled out with plenty of advance notice—at least a month in advance unless circumstances prevent it.
- If the faculty member is available to teach via Zoom during their absence from campus, class meetings can be held remotely with the approval of the department chair/director. However, this solution should not be used for more than two class meetings in a given semester except under extraordinary circumstances. If our students are signing up for face-to-face courses, we need to teach that way.
- Faculty members are responsible for arranging class coverage when they are going to be absent. A class meeting may be covered through, for example, the assignment of a self-guided project (though this option should also be used very sparingly), a demonstration by a librarian, or a guest presentation by a colleague.
- Faculty members are encouraged to find "in-house" substitutes whenever possible. In such cases, substitutes are not paid. The hope is that faculty will collegially agree to cover each other's courses on occasion.
- If an external substitute must be brought in to cover a class meeting, any fee must be paid through the department administrator, and not "under the table." The source of such funding will be determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the chair and, if appropriate, the dean.